

Fairport Convention, John Barleycorn

There were three men come out of the west, their fortunes for to try
And these three men made a solemn vow, John Barleycorn would die
They've ploughed, they've sown, they've harrowed, thrown clods upon his head
Till these three men were satisfied John Barleycorn was dead

(Chorus)

There's beer all in the barrel and brandy in the glass
But little Sir John, with his nut-brown bowl, proved the strongest man at last
They've let him lie for a long long time till the rains from heaven did fall
And little Sir John sprang up his head and so amazed them all
They've let him stand till midsummer's day and he looks both pale and wan
Then little Sir John's grown a long long beard and so become a man

(Chorus)

(Chorus)

They've hired men with the sharp-edged scythes to cut him off at the knee
They've rolled him and tied him around the waist, treated him most barbarously
They've hired men with the sharp-edged forks to prick him to the heart
And the loader has served him worse than that for he's bound him to the cart
So they've wheeled him around and around the field till they've come unto a barn
And here they've kept their solemn word concerning Barleycorn
They've hired men with the crabtree sticks to split him skin from bone
And the miller has served him worse than that for he's ground him between two stones

(Chorus)

(Chorus)

And the huntsman he can't hunt the fox nor loudly blow his horn
And the tinker he can't mend his pots without John Barleycorn